

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Added text is indicated by underlining, deleted text is indicated by ~~striking through~~. Changes are identified by a change bar in the margin.

Listing of Claims:

1-9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) A method of operating a storage system,
wherein when a storage system detects that an amount free space of the storage
system has become less than a predetermined value, a remote storage area is provided by
performing a mount operation on one or more disk units at a remote storage system in
communication with said storage system so that said remote storage area serves as said storage
area,

wherein a size and a speed of at least one of reading and writing of said remote
storage area to be utilized are ~~notified-specified in a utilization demand message from said~~
storage system to said remote storage system that identifies a predetermined port ID of the
storage system, and

wherein said remote storage system determines if it is ~~possible to provide said~~
remote storage area can be provided in accordance with said size and speed, and if it is possible,
sends a data packet from the remote storage system to the storage system, said data packet
identifying a remote unit ID of the remote storage area that is to be stored in a port management
table of the storage system in accordance with the port ID identified in the utilization demand
message and thereby mounting said remote storage area and providing provides said remote
storage area having said size and said speed as the storage area for said storage system.

11. (currently amended) A method of operating a storage system,
wherein when a storage system detects that an amount of its free space has
become less than a predetermined value, a remote storage area is provided by performing a

mount operation on one or more disk units at a remote storage system in communication with said storage system so that said remote storage area serves as said storage area,

wherein a utilization state of said remote storage area for said storage system is monitored in said remote storage system, and

wherein whether or not one or more spare disk units in said storage system is to be provided is decided according to said utilization state;

wherein providing spare disk units comprises sending a data packet from the remote storage system to the storage system, said data packet identifying a remote unit ID of the remote storage area that is to be stored in a port management table of the storage system in accordance with a port ID of the storage system identified in a utilization demand message from the storage system to the remote storage system and thereby mounting said remote storage area and providing said remote storage area having said size and said speed as the storage area for said storage system.

12. (currently amended) A method of operating a storage system, wherein when a storage system detects that an amount of its free space has become less than a predetermined value, a remote storage area is provided by determining if it is possible to provide the remote storage area in accordance with a specification of the storage system and, if it is possible, then performing a mount operation on one or more disk units at a remote storage system in communication with said storage system so that said remote storage area serves as said storage area,

wherein data stored and managed in said remote storage area is copied to the storage area of said storage system when the storage area of said storage system is enlarged;

wherein the mount operation comprises sending a data packet from the remote storage system to the storage system, said data packet identifying a remote unit ID of the remote storage area that is to be stored in a port management table of the storage system in accordance with a port ID of the storage system identified in a utilization demand message from the storage system to the remote storage system, and thereby mounting said remote storage area and

15 providing said remote storage area having said size and said speed as the storage area for said
16 storage system.

13-20. (canceled)

1 21. (currently amended) A method of operating a storage system,
2 wherein when a storage system detects that an amount of free space on at least
3 one first disk unit installed in said storage system has become less than a predetermined value, a
4 remote storage area that is provided by at least one second disk unit installed in a remote storage
5 system in communication with said storage system is made available as said storage area by
6 determining if it is possible to provide said remote storage area in accordance with specifications
7 of the storage system and, if it is possible, then by performing a mounting operation of said at
8 least one second disk unit,

9 wherein said storage system stores a correspondence between:
10 a port ID for specifying each disk unit installed on said storage system, and
11 an identifier of said first disk unit, and
12 wherein, when said storage system uses said remote storage area as its storage
13 area by performing a mounting operation, said storage system stores a correspondence between:
14 said port ID, and
15 an identifier of said second disk unit that is provided by said remote storage
16 system area;

17 wherein a size and speed of at least one of reading and writing of said remote
18 storage area to be utilized are specified in a utilization demand message from said storage system
19 to said remote storage system that identifies a predetermined port ID of the storage system; and
20 wherein the mounting operation comprises sending a data packet from the remote
21 storage system to the storage system, said data packet identifying a remote unit ID of the remote
22 storage area that is to be stored in a port management table of the storage system in accordance
23 with the port ID of the storage system and thereby mounting said remote storage area and
24 providing provides said remote storage area having said size and said speed as the storage area
25 for said storage system.

22. (currently amended) A method of operating a storage system, the method comprising:

receiving a ~~designation command~~ utilization demand message at a remote storage system, wherein the ~~designation command~~ utilization demand message specifies a size and a speed of at least one of reading and writing of a remote storage area of the remote storage system and that identifies a predetermined port ID of the storage system;

determining if it is possible for the remote storage system to provide a remote storage area to the storage system in accordance with the ~~designation command~~ utilization demand message specification of size and speed;

performing a mount operation on one or more disk units at the remote storage system so that said remote mounted disk units serve as additional storage area for the storage system, in response to determining that it is possible to provide said remote storage area, and otherwise indicating that no mount operation could be performed;

wherein the mount operation comprises sending a data packet from the remote storage system to the storage system, said data packet identifying a remote unit ID of the remote storage area that is to be stored in a port management table of the storage system in accordance with the port ID of the storage system and thereby mounting said remote storage area and providing provides said remote storage area having said size and said speed as the storage area for said storage system.

23. (previously presented) A method of operating a storage system according to claim 22, wherein the designation command designates a port ID of the storage system, to which the remote storage area will be mounted.

24. (previously presented) A method of operating a storage system according to claim 22, further comprising:

providing a remote unit ID to the storage system, wherein the remote unit ID identifies the remote storage area of the performed mount operation.

- 1 25. (previously presented) A method of operating a storage system according
2 to claim 22, wherein the remote unit is automatically mounted in response to detecting that an
3 amount of free space of the storage system has become less than a predetermined value.